Connecticut General Assembly - Joint Committee on Public Health
Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106
February 23, 2017

Re: GB/SB 795 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF HEALTH STRATEGY AND IMPROVING THE CERTIFICATE OF NEED PROGRAM.

Dear Members of the Committee on Public Health:

My name is Supriyo B. Chatterjee and I reside in West Hartford Connecticut and work in Healthcare Economics & Technology. I would like to submit my public testimony in support of **GB/SB 795 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF HEALTH STRATEGY AND IMPROVING THE CERTIFICATE OF NEED PROGRAM**.

GB/SB 795 calls for the establishment of 'The Office of Health Strategy' with a responsibility for a comprehensive and cohesive healthcare vision with cost containment for the state. This includes the development of the All-Payers Claim Database (APCD), State Innovation Model (SIM) program, Health Information Technology initiatives, and directing and overseeing Office of Health Care Access (OHCA), the Health Insurance Exchange and the Certificate-Of-Need (CON) process for Connecticut care providers.

I would like to emphasize two mandates entrusted to 'The Office of Health Strategy' and within it, the Office of Health Care Access (OHCA) – (i). Conducting on a biennial basis, a state-wide health care facility utilization study. (ii). In consultation with other state agencies, shall establish and maintain a state-wide health care facilities and services plan. Both these mandates encompasses the matter of health equity in the state. Working without the cooperation of other state agencies could lead to gaps in coordination of services, measurement & reporting across the agencies, and also in distribution of funding to address health equity matters. An estimated cost of health disparities in the state is at $550m. A unified approach from the 'Office of Health Strategy' to address health equity would improve the effectiveness of related programs and manage the economic costs of disparities.

At this moment in time in Connecticut, there are several initiatives that are innovative and forward-looking in its approach to tackle the rising costs and uncertainties of public health programs. The

Connecticut Medicaid program provides healthcare coverage to almost 750,000 individuals (20% of the population). The Medicaid expenditures represents about 14% of the state budget, and totals approximately $6bn annually. With the recent changes in administration, the program may undergo fiscal changes via the use of "Block Grants". This may put more financial pressures on the State's Medicaid budget in the future. The development of State Innovative Model (SIM), Healthcare Technology applications and Health Information Exchange initiatives under the 'Office of Health Strategy' offers the promise of mitigating costs and uncertainties. This is possible with a focused goal of deploying a comprehensive and cohesive healthcare vision with cost containment as part of the objectives.

Within the State Innovation Model (SIM) - using Community Health Workers and Population Health are a cost-effective way for adding value, improving health outcomes and addressing health equity. As healthcare payments are moving from a fee-based service to a holistic value-based service – participation of Community Health Workers and deploying Population Health programs will be increasingly vital. Addressing social and behavioral determinants of health can bring achievement in health outcomes at lesser costs. Other important initiatives like Healthcare Technology and Information Exchange applications can contribute immensely – for e.g., Race, Ethnicity & Language (REL) data collection, that is also mandated by Federal healthcare programs including the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Section 4302), can be instrumental when utilized in operations, analysis, and planning and can provide insights into more efficient and effective care management. Well integrated systems have helped reduce healthcare disparities and improved the quality of care. The American Medical Association in its 'Commission To End Healthcare Disparities' is examining best practices in REL data management.

I urge you to consider and pass the proposed GB/SB 795 bill which will ensure healthier people in our state.

Thank you,

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